American Studies, Balazs The Wizard of Oz as allegory

1. Haymarket Riot Reading (The Tin Man)
2. Populist Party Platform Reading (The Farmer)
3. William Jennings Bryan Cross of Gold (The Lion)

NOTE OZ is an abbreviation for a measurement of gold and the actual book, The Wizard of Oz, the Yellow Brick Road was the Gold Brick Road.

The have-nots, the Tin Man (the industrial worker) and the Scarecrow (the farmer) and the Lion William Jennings Bryan

By the late 19th Century, Unions were organized but too often strikes ended in violent confrontations

**Read Haymarket Riot** and consider the following guiding question- How do you think the Union leaders responded to the actions of the anarchists? To what extent did the anarchists undermine the union and advance the interests of owners?

**Populist Party Platform** -Farmers were frustrated by low prices for the crop as the supply ballooned. Between more and better land coming into production and innovations, farmers were gaining enormous yields but despite the increases in population, demand wasn’t sufficient to keep prices stable. Farmers were also frustrated by the high costs they were incurring on loans for seed and equipment as well as what they felt was unfair railroad practices that caused transportation costs for their goods to soar. Many were left indebted and some left bankrupt. While reading and annotating the Populist Party Platform consider

Guiding questions

1. Why would farmers want the currency to be backed by the more abundant silver than gold as well as have more $ circulating through the economy?
2. **Look up what a graduated (or progressive) income tax is (you may want to ask your parents)**. Who would ever favor that!?
3. Why would they favor “socializing” the railroad system and ensuring “equal rates” for shipping (remember JD Rockefeller’s actions with the small oil companies and transportation)
4. Why do you think they resented the broad ownership of land by the Railroad and how did they feel about Native Americans?
5. What did they want in terms of elections and why do you think they felt that way?
6. In the 1870s and 1890s the country sustained significant economic downturns. Note the farmers concern for idle labor (there was no unemployment insurance or welfare at the time, so idle labor meant people would have to beg, steal or borrow if they were out of work).

**No Cross of Gold**- In the early 1890s, the Populist Party was extremely successful winning some Governorships, Senatorial contests and even some electoral votes. Seeing this 3rd Party’s rise, the Democratic Party began to adopt many of the same ideas. In 1896 William Jennings Bryan ran for President on the Democratic ticket. His speech- Cross of Gold, is one of the most well-known speeches by a candidate for office.

Guiding question- Why do you think the Gold standard continued to be such a major issue? How does he use the American Revolution to advance his argument? What is he referring to when he brings up a crown of thorns?

The Wizard of Oz-

What do you think the Emerald city represented, the good and bad witches, Kansas, Dorothy, the Wizard?